

# PARTNERSHIPS

HOOK 'EM,  
THEN REEL THEM IN





## HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Although you can conduct food stamp outreach alone, your efforts will be more successful if you work with other organizations. Developing partnerships with such organizations is vital as you begin your outreach planning.

Because only local food stamp offices can certify clients for benefits, one of your most critical partners is your local food stamp office. Other potential partners are listed on the next page. These community and faith-based groups, retailers, and anti-hunger advocacy groups across the country have a common goal to reduce hunger and improve nutrition. By coming together in partnership, we can advance our efforts to inform individuals and families in our communities about the benefits of the FSP.

Although you can conduct food stamp outreach alone, your efforts will be more successful if you work with like-minded organizations. Partnerships with other groups can expand your ability to get the word out.

"Pathmark is partnering with...local organizations to provide information and screenings on various health issues... We are delighted to partner with so many organizations on this important community outreach. Our partnership will provide useful information to the area's residents and create an awareness of the valuable resources which are at their disposal."

Rich Savner  
Director of Public Affairs  
Pathmark, Carteret, NJ

### *How partners can play a role in outreach:*

- Financial contribution for production of materials such as pamphlets, bus/subway ads, potholders, and recipe cards.
- In-store space to conduct nutrition events and prescreening.
- PSA placement or donated print advertisement space.
- Support to help fill out food stamp application forms and obtain verification documents.
- Company name appearing in food stamp media materials.
- Company's logo on food stamp signage and in outreach materials.
- Opportunity for a company representative to attend or participate at events.



**Keys to  
establishing and  
maintaining a  
strong partnership**

- Present the partnership as a "win-win" for all parties
- Agree on goals and objectives
- Develop and clearly define roles and responsibilities
- Practice clear and frequent communications
- Show appreciation through recognition



### Reaching Out to Community Partners

Community, faith-based and antihunger advocacy groups across the country have a common goal to reduce hunger and improve nutrition. Retailers can offer facilities and allow community groups to conduct outreach. By coming together in partnership, we can advance our efforts to inform individuals and families in our communities about the FSP, ensuring that everyone can eat right, even when money's tight.



If a relationship is not currently in place, a good way to initiate a partnership is by sending a letter to a community relations, marketing, or communications contact. Your letter should outline your outreach effort, provide background information, and describe the nature of your request. Be sure to follow up your letter with a phone call.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD SUPERMARKETS

123 Any Road  
Anytown, USA

[DATE]  
[NAME]  
[TITLE]  
[STORE NAME]  
[ADDRESS]  
[CITY], [STATE] [ZIP]

Dear Mr./Ms. [NAME]:

The Food Stamp Program (FSP) is the first line of defense against hunger. On behalf of [STORE NAME], I am writing to invite you to lend your support to [STATE/CITY/ TOWN'S] food stamp outreach effort by *[Describe the request — an activity you would like the organization to participate in, such as: hosting a health fair or prescreening event; volunteering; distributing informational flyers or promoting events].*

The goal of this outreach effort is to ensure that everyone who is eligible for the FSP knows about the Program and is able to access benefits. Our store is helping to promote the nutrition assistance benefits of the FSP. *[Provide local information on what your store is doing, who you plan to target in your campaign, and the need in your community (number of potentially eligible individuals that are not being served for this type of effort.)]*

We hope you will join us in supporting [STORE or COALITION NAME's] outreach efforts; we would be honored to work with you. With your support, we are confident that we can reach more of [CITY/STATE's] individuals and families not yet enrolled in the Food Stamp Program. By participating, *[List benefits to organization such as: reinforces position as community leader; provides opportunity for positive media exposure; offers community service opportunities; etc.].*

I will contact you in the next few days to further discuss the vital role you can play in helping our community. In the meantime, feel free to contact me at [PHONE NUMBER] should you have any questions. I have also enclosed additional information on food stamp benefits for your review.

Again, we hope you can join us in supporting this important effort, and look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,  
[NAME]  
[TITLE]



## ***What if I have questions about outreach and partnerships?***

Learn from your colleagues by joining the Food Stamp Outreach Coalition, a nationwide network of retailers, advocacy groups and partner organizations that works to promote the health and nutrition benefits of the FSP. The Coalition works together to end hunger and improve nutrition. For more information about the Coalition and how you can join, please check out the web site at:

[www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/about.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/about.htm).

## **Potential Partners**

Food Banks and Pantries	Community Action Agencies
Homeless Shelters and Soup Kitchens	Family Support Centers
Legal Aid	Salvation Army
Goodwill	Voluntary Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Locations
Local Health Departments	Employment Assistance Offices
Schools	Departments of Motor Vehicles
Property Tax Offices	Mayors or City/County Officials
Housing Projects	Corrections Departments (Imminent Release)
Local Social Security Offices	Local Military Bases or Installations
Local or Regional IRS Offices	Churches
Temples	Mosques
Synagogues	Employers
Transit Providers	Local Unions
Utility Companies	Other Grocery Stores/Retail Associations
Doctors	Hospitals
Pharmacies	Community Health Centers
Assisted Living Facilities	Area Agencies on Aging
AARP Chapters	Meals-On-Wheels Programs
TV	Internet
Radio	Newspapers

## ***Outreach Events***

Conducting an outreach event in your store is one of the best ways to reach those who are eligible. Partnerships with community groups to undertake outreach activities can help to make your event a success. You may also find reaching out to your local, State, or national retailer association such as the Food Marketing Institute or the National Grocers Association beneficial. These groups are interested in your success and can provide additional assistance.



### Five Helpful Hints for Hosting an Outreach Event

**Evaluate demographics.** Who are the most underserved in your area? Gear your event towards your customers: working families, new parents or seniors.

**Find the right partners.** Traditional social service organizations like food banks, religious organizations or homeless shelters are a great place to start, but many retailers also find success partnering with less traditional organizations like schools or senior centers.

**Determine the interests of your customers.** Focus your outreach efforts towards meeting your customers' needs. Will an information campaign alone do the trick? What about the use of public service announcements? Or should you host an outreach event? What types of information should you provide at your event? What will attract your customers?

**Focus on health.** Customers respond best when outreach events are focused on health or nutrition. Make sure your event has something for the whole family. Successful events have included healthy cooking demonstrations; dental screenings for kids; blood pressure and mammography screenings; distributing recipe cards for adults; easy no-cook recipe cards for kids; puzzles and games; sampling of local produce and other locally made products; and prescreening for the FSP as well as Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and children (WIC) (this works best in private areas such as a manager's office). The USDA and local FSP staff can also be invited to answer questions and distribute literature.

**Find the right space.** Outreach events generally work best in stores with a lot of front-end space or parking lots. However, even the smallest stores in places like New York City have found their events to be hugely successful and seen sales increase with the right planning ahead of time.

### Additional Tips for Conducting Outreach Events

1. Select a busy day to hold your outreach event. The most successful events are on the weekends and during busy sales periods.
2. Educate your employees on food stamp benefits and the community impact. It is possible that some employees might benefit from the FSP. They also feel rewarded for having been a part of an event that helps so many people.
3. Encourage partners to conduct eligibility prescreening using laptops. Be sure that an Internet connection is available if needed.
4. If you choose to do eligibility prescreening, be sure to select as private an area in the store as possible to make the customer feel at ease and comfortable.
5. Arranging for product demonstrations of healthy foods with in-store demonstration companies can encourage customer participation. Vendor companies will often donate products.
6. Invite representatives from your local hospital to conduct blood pressure and diabetes testing. Medical students often can volunteer to provide these much needed preventative services.
7. Always have written materials on hand because some customers may not want to stop or have the time. However, they or someone they know might be eligible.





## Sample outreach event setup



**Pathmark (Spanish)**

**Pathmark (English)**

1 An eligibility worker with the United Way of New York City helps an individual at a Food Stamp Program prescreening event in Chinatown. *Photo credit: United Way of New York City*

2 & 3 Food Change eligibility workers hold a healthy cooking demonstration at a local grocery store and provide shoppers with information on the Food Stamp Program. *Photo credit: Food Change, NYC*

4 Students learn how to prepare healthy snacks at this Kids in the Kitchen event in St. Paul, MN. *Photo credit: USDA*

5 An eligibility worker helps an individual at a Food Stamp Program prescreening event in Philadelphia. *Photo credit: Pathmark*

6 An eligibility worker helps an individual at a Food Stamp prescreening event in Los Angeles. *Photo credit: Cardenas Market*

